

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 25, 1880.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. FERRY, from the Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 1202.]

*The Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1202) for the relief of Hiram S. Town, postmaster of the city of Ripon, in the county of Fond du Lac, in the State of Wisconsin, having had the same under consideration, report as follows:*

From the affidavits of the postmaster and his deputy, and the report of the special agent of the Post-Office Department, sent to investigate the case, it appears that the building in which the post-office at Ripon, Wis., is located, took fire from adjoining premises from unknown causes, and destroyed books, records, and blanks of the office, and of money \$250, said to have belonged to the general postal fund, and of the money-order fund \$140.56, less the sum of \$8.56, which was saved.

A credit is also asked for burned vouchers of the money-order fund, which, with the money of the fund destroyed, it is claimed, would aggregate \$566.11, as stated in the bill.

In reply to inquiries from the committee, the superintendent of the money-order system states that the vouchers included in this amount are for certain paid money-orders, and that under the regulations of the department the postmaster was required to hold said vouchers until the date of transmission of his weekly statement to the department, which would have fallen on the day succeeding that of the fire. From an official statement from the Sixth Auditor of the Treasury, it appears that the amount claimed as belonging to the money-order fund agrees with the balance on the books of the office. Your committee observe, however, that the amount of \$8.56, reported as saved from this fund, has not been deducted, and that the bill should be amended to show the correct amount as actually burned.

Your committee are of opinion that the amount of cash and vouchers lost from the money-order fund has been reasonably verified from the department records, and that the necessity for having the money and vouchers of said fund at the post-office at the date of the fire is sufficiently shown.

Your committee draw a distinction between the loss from the fund set apart for the separate business of the money-order branch and the loss of money from the general postal revenues.

The means of securing public money of the general postal fund are various, and within the control of the postmaster himself. Also the difficulties of establishing evidence as to the character and amount of

the money claimed to have been lost are greater, and such evidence, or partial evidence, can rarely, if ever, be checked or verified with exactness by the department.

In the judgment of the committee, good policy does not permit of relief from responsibility for losses of this character, and they recommend that the claim for \$250 belonging to the general post-office fund be disallowed.

The committee report back the bill and recommend its passage with amendments, as follows:

Strike out all after the word "of," where it last occurs in line 5, down to and including the word "eleven," in line 9, and in lieu thereof insert: *Five hundred and fifty-seven dollars and fifty-five.*

After the word "the," in line 10, insert the words *United States.*

After the word "fund," in line 11, strike out the words "all of."

